day also. But the total supply, as I said, was about 4,500 tonnes. We started supplying onion at a subsidised rate on 20th July and it has been going on till now.

SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHVAN: Sir, the answer reveals the fact that the Government has no control over the vegetable trade in this country. What is the position in our country? As per the report, the prices of all the essential vegetables are going up. Last year, the price rise for 80 kgs of potatoes was between Rs. 140/- and Rs. 520/- This year, on the same date, the price rise for 80 kgs. of potatoes was between Rs. 700/- and Rs. 1400/-. As regards tomatoes, last year the price was between Rs. 182/-. and Rs. 200/- for forty kgs. of tomatoes. This year, the price ranged between Rs. 425/- and Rs. 525/-for forty kgs. of tomatoes. As regards onion, we don't have any control. So, what are you going to do? What has happened in this country? The onion production this year has come down. What have we done? In the month of June, it was Rs. 6 per kilo, in July it was Rs. 24/- per kg, in October it was Rs. 40/ - per kg. This price was four hundred times more than the actual price in June. There was a failure on the production front. They had exported 20,000 MTs of onion in July and 15,000 MTs of onion in August. So, I want to know specifically why this Government has given permission to export onion from this country when the onion crop has failed this year.

Secondly, I would like to have an assurance from the Government that if such a situation comes, the Government would intervene and give financial assistance to the States to intervene and make the vegetables available.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: Sir, the first question is regarding the prices of onion. The prices of onion have been going down. As per Yesterday's figure, it is Rs. 22/- per kg. in Delhi, Rs. 17/- per kg. in Lucknow, Rs. 17/- per kg. in Mumbai, Rs. 10/- per kg. in Bhopal, Rs. 15/- per k.g. in Ahmedabad, Rs. 14/- per kg. in Chennai, Rs. 16/- per kg. in Hyderabad and Rs. 14/- per kg. in Bangalore. So, the price has been going down. So, the hon. Member has put the question when the prices have already gone down. It is correct that we don't have any control over the vegetable trade.

SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHVAN: I would like to know whether the Government will help the State Governments in similar situations to intervene in the market. Will the Minister give assistance to the State Governments? That is what I want to know.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: A decision has been taken that if the State wants to subsidise any of these vegetables, the Central Government will also bear the expenses to the extent of fifty per cent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTION

Gauge Conversion in Maharashtra

*85. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased state:

(a) details of projects for new lines, gauge conversion and electrification taken up in Maharashtra during the Seventh and the Eighth Five Year Plan;

(b) when these projects are likely to be completed;

(c) what is their present status;

(d) steps taken by Government to complete these projects;

(e) whether any new projects have been sanctioned during the Ninth Plan; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) to (d) Railway projects are not sanctioned State-wise and often fall in 2 or more States. However, the details of new lines, gauge conversion and electrification projects, falling partly or fully in Maharashtra, taken up during 7th and 8th Five Year Plans together with their present status are as under:-

NEW LINES

S.No.	Name of the project	State in which falling	Present Status
1.	Manikgarh-Chandur	Maharashtra	Completed
2.	Apta-Roha	Maharashtra	Completed
3.	Adilabad-Pimpalkutti	Andhra Pradesh & Maharashtra Completed	
4.	Mankhurd-Belapur	Maharashtra	Completed
5.	Roha-Sawantwadi	Maharashtra	Completed
6.	Panvel-Karjat	Maharashtra	Land acquisition completed. Work presently in progress on the 2.61 kms. long tunnel. The line is presently targeted for completion in 2001-2002 subject to availability of resources.
7.	Ahmednagar-Beed-Parli-Vaijnath	Maharashtra	Work has received the necessary clearances. Final location survery is in progress. Construction of new station building at Beed has been taken up.
8.	Amravati-Narkhed	Maharashtra	Land acquisition and earthwork in progress. Construction of new station building at Amravati has been taken up.
		GAUGE CONVERSION	
1.	Manmad-Aurangabad Jalna-Parbhani	Maharashtra	completed.
2.	Parbhani-Purna-Mudkhed	Maharashtra	Completed.
3.	Mudkhed-Adilabad	Maharashtra & Andhra Pradesh	Work has been taken up under BOLT Scheme. Earthwork is in progress. Work is targeted for completion next year provided the contractor is able to obtain funds which he has to tie up with financial institutions.
4.	Gondia-Chanda Fort	Maharashtra	Completed
5.	Miraj-Latur	Maharashtra	Work taken up in phases. In the first phase, Latur-Latur Road new line and Kurduwadi-Pandharpur conversion have been taken up, which are targeted for completion in 1999-2000.
6.	Solapur-Gadag	Maharashtra & Karnataka	Work taken up in phases. Hotgi-Bijapur section completed. Presently, work is in progress on Solapur-Hotgi section which is targeted for completion during the current year.

			Work on Bijapur Gadag section has been started and is targeted for completion in 9th plan subject to availability of resources.
7.	Jabalpur-Gondia including Balaghat-Katangi	Maharashtra & Madhya Pradesh	Final location survey for Gondia to Balaghat has been completed and for the balance portion from Balaghat to Katangi and Balaghat to Padriganj will be completed by 31.12.98. The final location survey from Padriganj to Jabalpur will be mostly in detour has been completed.
8.	Secunderabad-Mudkhed & Jankhampet-Bodhan	Maharashtra & Andhra Pradesh	The requisite clearances has been obtained. The tenders for earthwork and bridges have been invited. The tenders for Godavari bridge are also being processed.

ELECTRIFICATION

1.	Makudi-Balharshah (Part of Vijayawada-Balharshah electrification project)	Maharashtra & Andhra Pradesh	Completed.
2.	Diva-Panvel	Maharashtra	Completed.
3.	Bhusawal-Nagpur	Maharashtra	Completed.
4.	Balharshah-Wardha-Nagpur	Maharashtra	Completed.
5.	Burhanpur-Bhusawal (Part of Itarsi-Bhusawal project)	Maharashtra & Madhya Pradesh	Completed.
6.	Darimeta-Nagpur (Part of Itarsi Nagpur project)	Maharashtra & Madhya Pradesh	Completed.
7.	Bortalao-Nagpur (Part of Durg Nagpur Project)	Maharashtra & Madhya Pradesh	Completed.
8.	Manikgarh-Gadchandur: Tadali-Ghugus: Jalamb-Khamgaon: Butibori-Umrer and Majri-Rajur Branch lines: Badnera-Amravati	Maharashtra & Andhra Pradesh	Completed.

(e) to (f) Yes, Sir. The details of the projects sanctioned during the Ninth Plan period so far are as under:—

NEW LINES

1.	Baramati-Lonand via Phaltan	Maharashtra	The work will be taken up after the requisite clearances have been obtained.

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2.	Kopargaon-Shirdi	Maharashtra	Planning Commission have conveyed their approval to the project subject to the condition that the cost of the line is shared by the Temple Authority.

ELECTRIFICATION

1.	Udhna-Dasoda (Part of Udhna-Jalgaon Project)	Gujarat & Maharashtra	Work is in progress.

देश में उर्वरक उत्पादन

*86. **श्री चीमनभाई हरीभाई शुक्ल:** क्या रसायन और उर्वरक मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि देश में उर्वरक उत्पादन की दर विश्व में औसत उत्पादन दर की तुलना में कम है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस संबंध में तथ्य क्या है तथा किस देश में यह दर सर्वाधिक है;

(ग) क्या सरकार ने उत्पादन दर को बढ़ाने के लिए उर्वरक प्रौद्योगिकी मिशन स्थापित करने का निर्णय लिया है; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो इस मिशन की स्थापना कब तक किये जाने की संभावना है?

रसायन और उर्वरक मंत्री (श्री सुरजीत सिंह बरनाला): (क) और (ख) भारत नाइट्रोजनयुक्त और फास्फेटिक उर्वरकों का तीसरा सबसे बड़ा उत्पादक है और नाइट्रोजन तथा फास्फेट्स के उत्पादन में विश्व में इसका हिस्सा क्रमशः 9.4% तथा 7.6% है। नाइट्रोजन तथा फास्फेट के विश्व उत्पादन में चीन तथा संयुक्त राज्य अमरीका क्रमशः प्रथम और द्वितीय स्थान पर हैं। देश में पोटाश के कोई ज्ञात स्रोत नहीं हैं और पोटासिक उर्वरकों की सम्पूर्ण आवश्यकता का आयात किया जाता है। भारत तथा विश्व में गत चार वर्षों के दौरान उर्वरक पोषकों का उत्पादन और वृद्धि दर इस प्रकार है:—

उर्वरक पोषकों का उत्पादन और वृद्धि दर

	विश्व		भारत	
	उत्पादन (लाख मी॰ टन)	वृद्धि दर (प्रतिशत)	उत्पादन (लाख मी॰ टन)	वृद्धि दर (प्रतिशत)
1994-95	1364.07	3.5	104.38	15.4
1995-96	1435.37	5.2	113.35	8.6
1996-97	1481.74	3.2	111.55	(-) 1.6
1997-98	अनुपलब्ध	-	130.61	17.1

(ग) जी, नहीं।

(घ) प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

Hike in the Price of Essential Commodities

*87.SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the food security experts have stated that the steep rise in prices of onion, potato, salt and other essential food commodities in the country was caused by market manipulation, rather than the real shortage thereof;

(b) if so, what action Government have taken so far against the black marketeers and hoarders of stocks thereof; and

(c) whether Government have taken any decision, till date, to convene an urgent meeting of the Chief Ministers of all the States to discuss the steps to contain the steep hike in the prices of essential commodities?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) and (b) In recent months, various opinions have been expressed regarding the reasons for the steep rise in prices of essential commodities. As per the assessment of the Government, the recent increases in the prices of onions, potatoes and certain other essential commodities were due primarily to decline in their production caused in turn by adverse climatic conditions and decline in area under cultivation as also non-availability of sufficient quantities for imports in the international markets. There is no shortage of salt in the country. The Government has taken a number of measures to control and stabilise the prices of essential commodities. Import of onion and pulses have been placed under OGL at zero duty and import duty on